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AN ILLUSTRATOR OF CHILD LIFE.

BY WILLIAM MCKENDREE BANGS.

(With original illustrations by Maud Humphrey.)



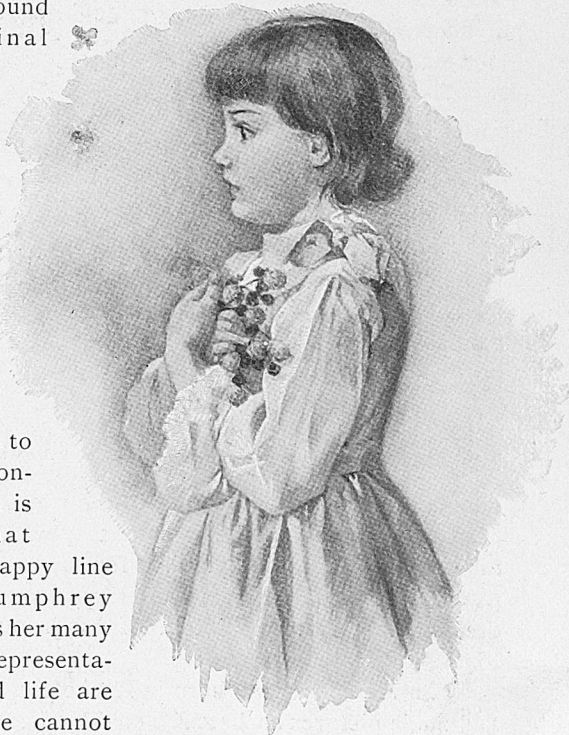
"JOSEPHINE."

Miss Maud Humphrey, or in her work as reproduced in the books she has illustrated for children or representing them. That an artist, or any one else for that matter, should "work along the line of least resistance" to accomplish the largest and best success possible, is a truth

so obvious that perhaps to state it is to express a commonplace; but it is evident that along that happy line has Miss Humphrey worked, for, as her many and various representations of child life are examined, one cannot fail to be impressed with

So fleeting are the expressions of a child's emotions, that successful and artistic representation of children has always been a difficult task; but, when it is successfully accomplished, pictures of children are almost invariably beautiful. And not only are children's pictures, therefore, very pleasing to those who love beauty—whose number, it is to be hoped, is growing and extending—but representations of our future men and women, which are at all adequate, must be interesting and gratifying to all who love children, and their number is certainly legion.

Very beautiful indeed, and very interesting, are the pictures of child life to be found in the original drawings and paintings of



"SWEET CLOVER."



the manifest pleasure she finds in the work, or to feel that her love for her subjects must be very real, and her sympathy with them deep and sincere. Otherwise, I take it, it would not be possible for her to so represent the characters of her little people, and to so suggest their thoughts and quick emotions. Her pictured children are not merely children of handsome faces and pretty clothes. They have something more.

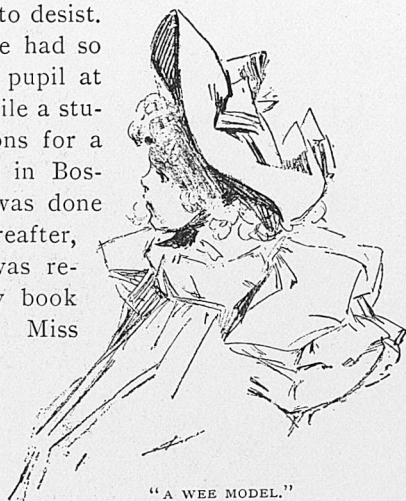
Miss Humphrey was born in Rochester. In her very earliest childhood she drew and made pictures as best she could. Her early hope was to become a painter of animals, and her youthful enthusiasm was for Rosa Bonheur. Before she was twelve she had begun to take lessons in drawing; but her eyes failing her in some measure,



"MEDITATION."

she was compelled for a while to desist. A few years later, however, she had so progressed that she became a pupil at the Art Students' League. While a student here she made illustrations for a children's magazine published in Boston. Her first work in color was done about this time; and soon thereafter, now about six years ago, she was requested to illustrate a holiday book then about to be prepared. Miss

Humphrey's pictures were of children, and were drawings in color, from life. This work received favorable notice and attention, and, it may almost be said, determined her aim and the manner in which she should pursue her art. Her efforts, it is true, have not been limited to pictures of children alone. Many other figure subjects, including notably charming pictures of young women, in black and white, and in color, have been the product of her pen or brush; but it is as a painter of child life



"A WEE MODEL."

that Miss Humphrey has achieved unquestionable, and her greatest, success.

While it may appear to the uninitiated that the picturing of children is a simple, straightforward task, the contrary is the truth. To begin with, the children's artist has a twofold difficulty to contend with. The brain-whirling restlessness of the young model is a thing to discourage the tyro in this line of art work, and the difficulty of fixing with pen or pigment the ever-changing expression of a child's countenance—the portrayal of the sweet, unsullied soul of such wee characters as engage the talent of Miss Humphrey, is an accomplishment both arduous and thought-provoking.

It is true that the artist here considered often falls short of her ideal; that her pictorial em-



"IN SNOWBALL TIME."



"A FINE LADY."



bodiments of small boys and girls lack spirit and expression ; but none the less there is a sparkle of style in her delineations of childhood that amply recompenses one for the missing qualities of her work.

To her work Miss Humphrey brings a gay and joyous fancy. There is an evidence of zest in her drawings. She has the gift of placing rightly delicate and pleasing qualities of color. She also appreciates the limit to which an artist, dealing solely with one class of subjects, may go. One is convinced in viewing her children on paper and canvas that the artist's heart pulsated warmly for the tiny models from whom she drew her inspiration.

It is clearly evident, too, that Miss Humphrey is partial to the miniature men and women of a past

epoch ; for while her children are modern enough in face, form, and occupation, they are more often than not arrayed in the quaint attire of youngsters long since passed into great-grandparenthood and gathered to their forefathers in weedy church-yards. This is, of course, because of the great picturesqueness of old-time garbing ; for the clothing of the *fin de siècle* child, like the attire of its parents, is more funereal or grotesque than artistic and eye-pleasing.

It has often been remarked that while women are supposed to thoroughly understand childhood above all other phases of life, they rarely paint it exclusively, and when they do, it is in a strictly ideal light.

Miss Humphrey, it is plain to be seen, has a decided preference for child women, and dainty little women at that. The small boy of to-day is not picturesque



"DEAD BROKE."



"THE CARES OF MOTHERHOOD."



"GOOD-BY."



"A SUDDEN SHOWER."

enough to please her fancy, perhaps, or pranks and naughtiness have no humor in them for her. Oddly enough, however, another child painter, and a man at that, invariably chooses these neglected boys for his most engaging pictures.

But dominating all Miss Humphrey's work is the note of seriousness. Her purpose is the picturing of child nature in its best moods, without affectation or a falsifying of visible facts. In her own peculiar undertaking in the field of art she has attained a much-deserved distinction, and as a student of childhood—its foibles and pleasantries—she is alone among women painters and illustrators.